



October 16, 2006



Armed career criminal is sentenced to 15 years in prison

A federal judge today sentenced **Laron Paschal**, 36, of Providence, to 15 years in federal prison as an armed career criminal. In May, Paschal pled guilty to heroin trafficking and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the hearing in May at which Paschal pled guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Zechariah Chafee said that the government could prove that, on November 23, 2005, Providence Police stopped Paschal's car on Francis Street after observing an apparent drug deal outside the Providence Place Mall. As Paschal got out of his car, he dropped two bags of heroin. Police arrested him and found more heroin and some cocaine on his possession. During a search of Paschal's home on Home Avenue, detectives found a .357 caliber revolver and a box of .357 caliber ammunition, both of which Paschal later admitted belonged to him.

When he pled guilty to the weapons offense, Paschal had at least three prior serious felony and drug trafficking convictions, which qualified him as an armed career criminal under federal law. His prior felonies include drug trafficking and breaking and entering with intent to commit a felony.

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Providence Police investigated the case. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provided assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chafee prosecuted it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 750 years in federal prison.

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